FIRST COMICS™
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NO. 19
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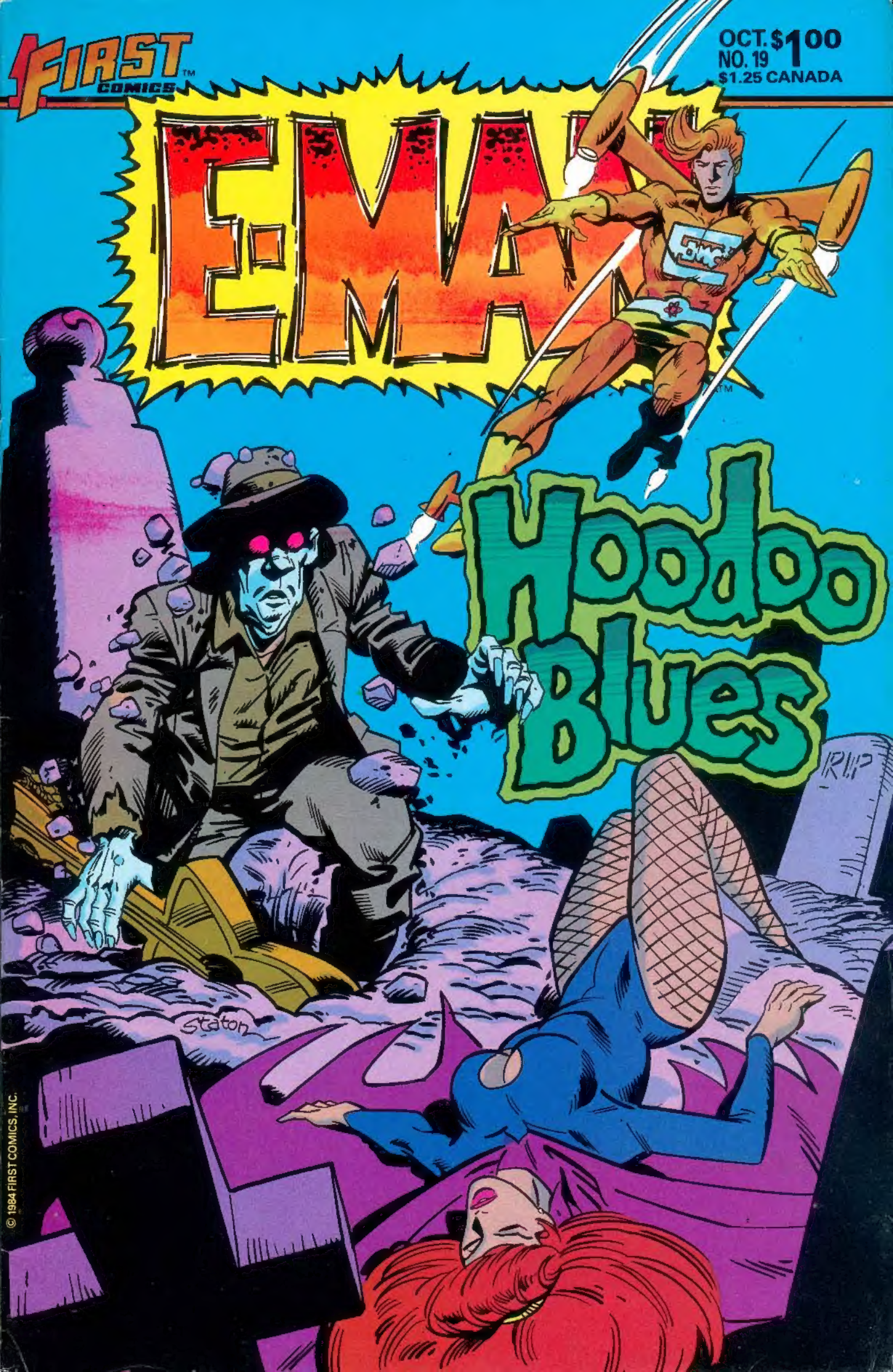
E-MAN™



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%FIRST COMICS,
1014 DAVIS STREET,
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS
60201

Dear Mike and Joe,

My, my. In issue #15 of E-Man you have captured the humor of the original series, the wild gimmickry of an episode of "Mission Impossible," the excitement of a John D. McDonald detective novel, the action of an old Republic serial, and enough assorted plot twists to impress all those fans who are rabid complexity buffs. All this, plus some nifty scenes with Nova in her underwear.

Joe Staton's cover of Mauser was beautiful. I wish First would publish a portfolio of E-Man (and American Flagg!) covers. Staton's work is an endless source of joy for me and I truly feel (and history will bear me out on this) that Staton is right up there with Bode, Cole, and Mayer as an artist whose work is a tribute to visual humor. No one does the kind of art Staton does better.

T.E. Pouncey
Wichita, KA

Wow, that's certainly high praise, T.E. Vaughn Bode and Jack Cole were both major influences on the way I work. I sort of missed Shelley Mayer's work the first time around (I was following Chip and Dale more than the Three Mousketeers), but I am now discovering it through DC's digest reprints, and I may be finding a new influence.

Dear E-Maniacs,

I'd never before read E-Man, until the day my husband dragged me into his favorite comic shop and I happened to see the cover of #15 — with that pathetic, scuzzy-looking Michael Mauser on it. I just had to buy it to find out who "got" the little guy and whether he managed to survive the first few pages of the book. This is serious stuff, I thought — until I saw his friend who lives with the strange lady and the koala bear and sleeps in the kitchen toaster ...

I just have to tell you people that, when it comes to travelling the highway of normal psychology, your collective mind must have taken a few detours along the way. Thanks to you, I am now hopelessly hooked on E-Man and my poor husband has been spending the past few frantic days hunting down for me those fourteen previous issues that I'd missed. (I saw one of the very first E-Man comics from the 70's, but I don't think they're half as outrageous as the series you're now doing.)

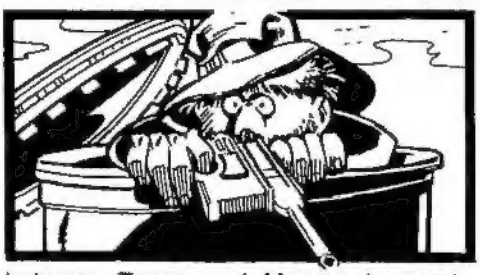
I'd like to see more of Mauser in the stories. He's easily the most endearing creep ever to slouch his way through a comic. His charm is indisputable — what else would keep Nova from decking him when he calls her a "bimbo"?

Nan Peel
147-27B Lake Shore Drive
Lake Ronkonkoma, NY
11779

More of Mauser? He's hard to keep out of sight, especially in polite company. We have something very special planned for the runt somewhere around issue #24.

Dear Joe and the Firsters',

I just finished reading E-Man #15 and I think it has been the best all around issue so far. The continuing relationship



between Tronn and Mauser is great. They are developing an almost Laurel and Hardy type relationship. The art work was just superb and I think Joe is best suited for the E-Man character. I'm glad that you Firsters' have decided to give Mauser a larger role in the E-Man series. I realize from reading various publications as well as taking note of sales at comic conventions that E-Man is not your biggest seller, but I hope you will continue to put out quality comics such as E-Man and your new series, Mars.

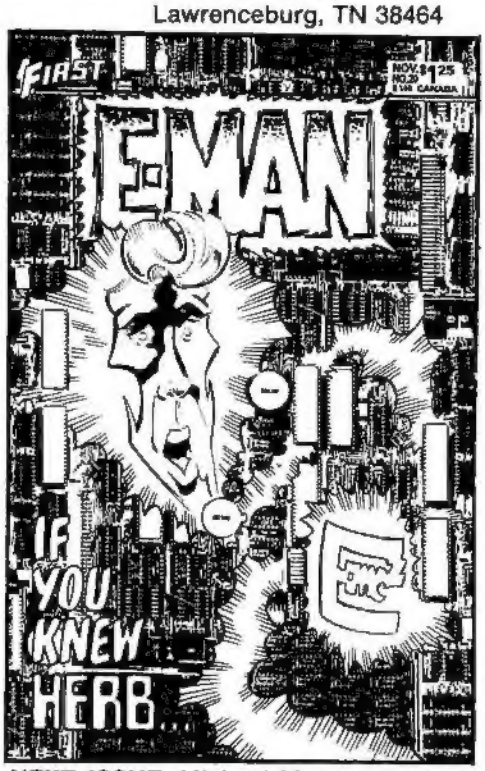
Al Charmatz
3049 Naranja Drive
Walnut Creek, CA 945598

Well, that is the idea around here at First: quality — but weird. I'm told **E-Man** *sales are picking up these days, so he should be around a while.*

Dear Joe,

E-Man is one of the best books on the market. Period. Alec, Nova, Mickey (ow! ow! ow! OK!), I mean *Michael* Mauser ("Mess? No sweat. I'll just kick it all behind the sofa.") and Teddy Q. ("!"), now that's a cast of characters! If anyone needs proof that Joe Staton is the writer for the book, I know people who are buying (and reading) it now who wouldn't touch Pasko's issues.

Keith A. Bowden
1808 Grandaddy Road
Lawrenceburg, TN 38464



NEXT ISSUE: Michael Mauser meets a dead person and has a close call with an iron maiden, while **E-Man** and Teddy fly off to Minnesota to face the menace called Herb, not to mention the dreaded Golden Gopher, who's not entirely all there.

— Joe Staton

Rick Obadiah, Publisher

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Joe Staton, Art Director
Rick Oliver, Associate Editor
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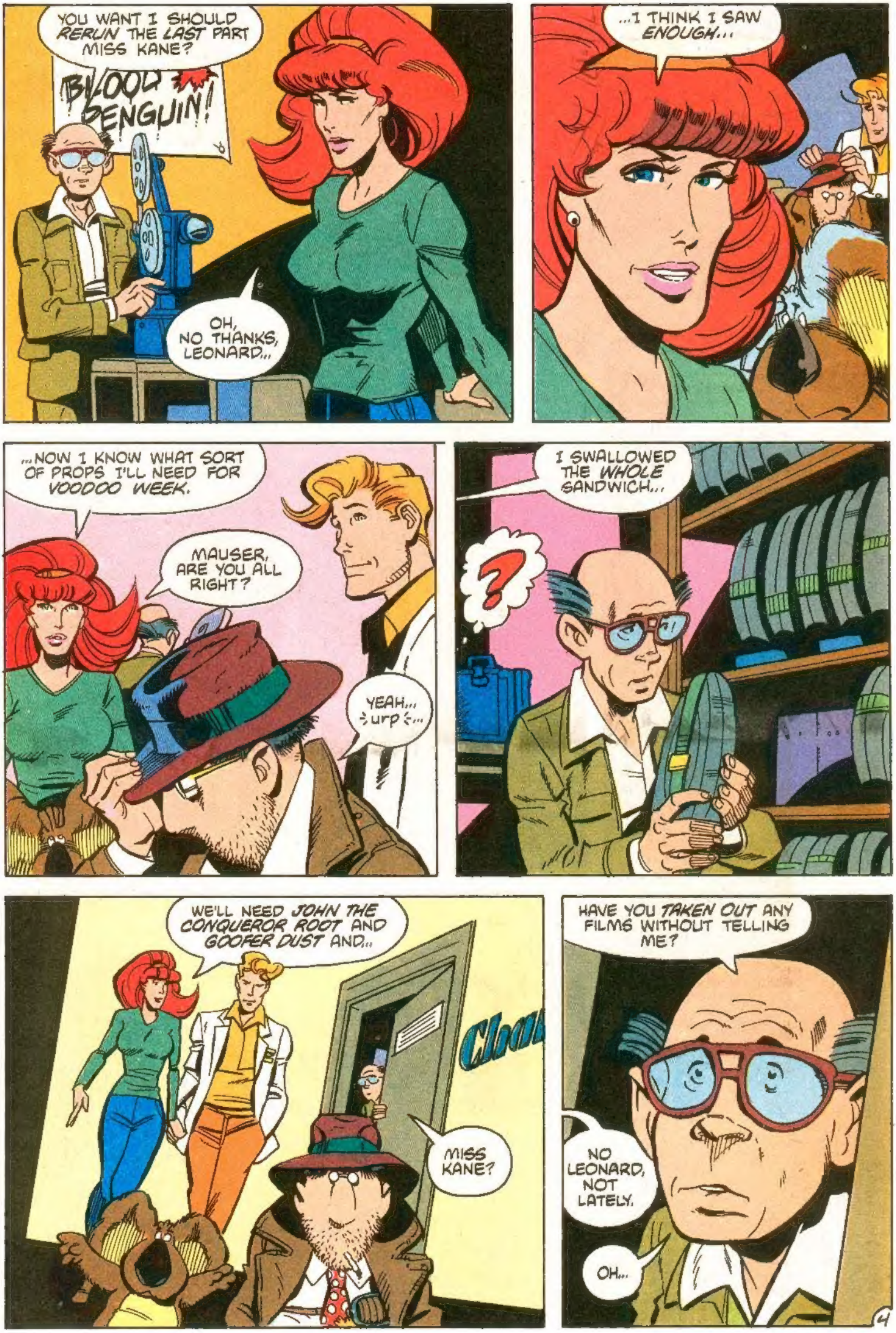
A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

E-MAN
TM
created by
NICOLA CUTI
and JOE STATON
HEY, E-MAN- BET YOU CAN'T DO A THREE-HEADED SQUIRREL WITH EARMUFFS.
MICHIGAN
CLARK
NOT RIGHT NOW, ARTHUR- I'M SUPPOSED TO MEET NOVA AT THE STATION- AND I'M LATE!
MARSHAL Fields
written and pencilled by
JOE STATON
inked by RICK BURCHETT
lettered by KEN BRUZENAK
colored by WENDY FIORE
edited by MIKE GOLD
HOODOO BLUES!

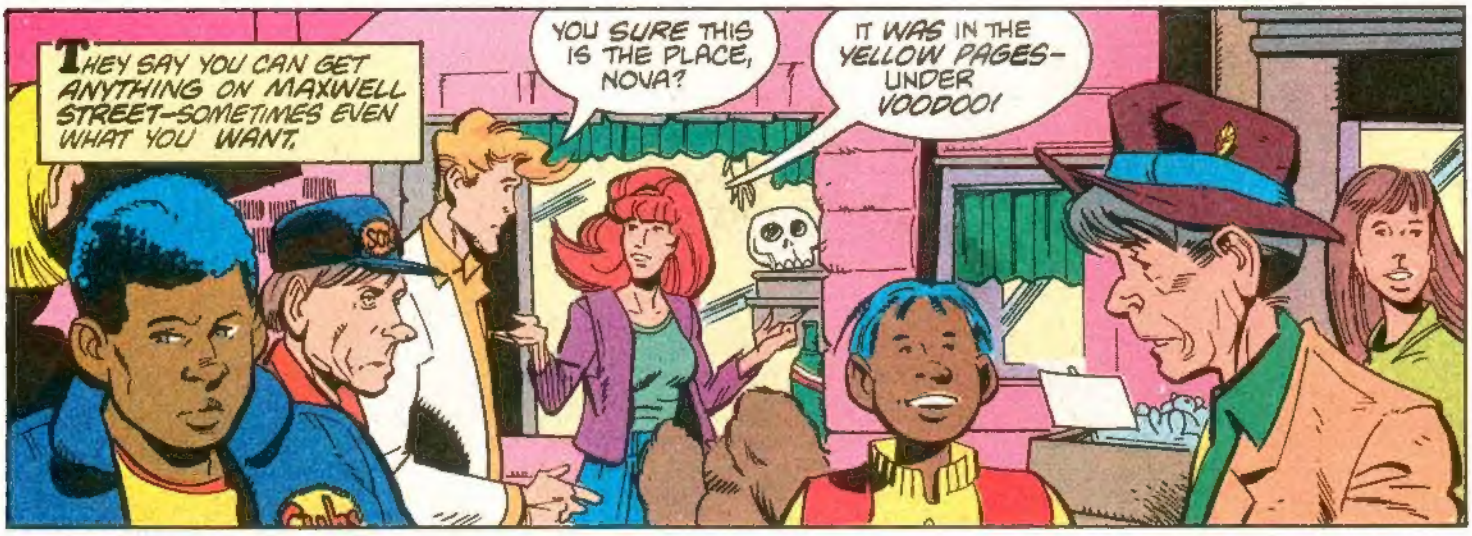
MAUSER, SIT DOWN! YOU'RE BLOCKING THE SCREEN!
I HOPE I HAVEN'T MISSED ANYTHING!
"BRIDE OF THE ZOMBIE" IS ONE OF MY FAVORITES.
BUT NO—I HAD TO STOP AND GET THAT LITTLE GIRL'S CAT OUT OF A TREE...
IT WASN'T MY FAULT I DROPPED HIM—HE SCRATCHED ME!
ANYWAY, CATS ARE SUPPOSED TO LAND ON THEIR FEET!
OH, WELL, THE VET SAID HE'D BE OKAY...
...PROBABLY...
MAUSER, SIT DOWN! I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING!
SCREENING ROOM
Channel 7

HERE COMES THE BEST SCENE IN THE MOVIE—
—MAUSER, WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?
I LOST MY SANDWICH...
!
—COME THROUGH THE WINDOW AS A LIGHT RAY—
—AND I MAY STILL MAKE IT!
IT WAS MY FAVORITE—SARDINES AND HEAD CHEESE AND LIMBURGER...
!
HERE IT IS—YER SITTIN' ON MY LUNCH, BEAR!
QUIET! THIS IS THE REALLY SCARY PART!
!
GLEEP!
TEDDY—LOOK OUT!
HEY, NOVA, AM I—
KRASSH!
—LATE?
GLEEP!


YOU WANT I SHOULD RERUN THE LAST PART MISS KANE?
BLOOD PENGUIN!
OH, NO THANKS, LEONARD...
...I THINK I SAW ENOUGH...
...NOW I KNOW WHAT SORT OF PROPS I'LL NEED FOR VOODOO WEEK.
MAUSER, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YEAH... >urp<...
I SWALLOWED THE WHOLE SANDWICH...
?
WE'LL NEED JOHN THE CONQUEROR ROOT AND GOOFER DUST AND...
MISS KANE?
HAVE YOU TAKEN OUT ANY FILMS WITHOUT TELLING ME?
NO LEONARD, NOT LATELY.
OH...
4

ON THE SOUTH SIDE, NIGHTCLUB OWNER WINSTON CULPEPPER HAS PROBLEMS OF HIS OWN...
BUCKET o' BLUES
Pizza
I'M TELLING YOU- GET OUT OF HERE!
TONIGHT Rattlesnake Roscoe LIVE!
I AIN'T SELLIN' OUT TO NOBODY- 'SPECIALLY NOT PUNKS LIKE YOU!
YOU EL POZHM TRASH MAY HAVED SCARED OFF ALL MY OTHER ACTS...
...BUT I AIN'T FINISHED YET...
RATTLESNAKE ROSCOE IS GONNA PLAY TONIGHT, AND THERE AIN'T NOTHIN' YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT!
THERE'S LOTS WE CAN DO, MAN!
AND NO RATTLESNAKE GONNA STOP US.
SOMEBODY MENTION RATTLESNAKE?
THAT'D BE ME.

HEY, MAN, YOU MUST BE LOST—IT'S TOO COLD FOR RATTLESNAKES 'ROUND HERE!
HUH, A SMART BOY WITH A KNIFE—
I'VE KNOWED WINSTON SINCE I CAME UP FROM MEMPHIS IN '42—AND WE SEEN A LOT OF SMART BOYS—
AND WE AIN'T AFRAID OF 'EM, BOY!
MAYBE YOU OUGHTA BE, OLD MAN!
RATTLESNAKE! LOOK OUT! HE'S GOT A—
—GUN!
THE WARNING IS TOO LATE. THE WOUND IS MORTAL. RATTLESNAKE ROSCOE WON'T BE PLAYING TONIGHT.


THEY SAY YOU CAN GET ANYTHING ON MAXWELL STREET—SOMETIMES EVEN WHAT YOU WANT.
YOU SURE THIS IS THE PLACE, NOVA?
IT WAS IN THE YELLOW PAGES—UNDER VOODOO!

HELLO? ANYBODY HERE?
DING!

YES-I AM LE DOCTEUR DUVALIER. SURELY YOU SEEK SOME OTHER ESTABLISHMENT?

OH, NO! SEE, I DO THIS TV SHOW WITH HORROR MOVIES...
...AND THIS WEEK I'M DOING VOODOO FILMS.
SO I NEED BLACK CAT BONES AND A RUBBER CHICKEN—

SURELY, MADAME, YOU REALIZE REAL CHICKENS MUST BE SACRIFICED?

OH, SURE—BUT WHO WANTS A YUKKY OLD DEAD CHICKEN AROUND A TV STUDIO?

NIGHT FALLS ON CHICAGO. WORKERS LEAVE THE LOOP; EL POZHM PROWLS ITS TURF-
-OTHERS GO ABOUT THEIR OWN ERRANDS.
ONE SUCH IS WINSTON CULPEPPER
"WHAT AM I DOING HERE?" HE THINKS.
"HOODOO DOCTOR CAN HELP YOU,' SAID MAMA LOUISE."
"I GOT NO TRUCK WITH VOODOO MAGIC."
"I'M A METHODIST!"
"BUT THERE AIN'T MUCH ELSE I CAN DO!"
ANYBODY HERE?
WE ARE HERE, WINSTON CULPEPPER.
YIII!

FIRST NOTES

YOU TOO, BUDDY! — part one

We've received a great deal of mail concerning the recent *Psychology Today* article entitled "R-Rated Comics." Maybe that's because I've been harping on similar issues, from the opposite viewpoint, in this column for some time.

Whereas we have run a couple of these letters in our sundry mail columns (particularly in **American Flagg!**), I guess it is time I put my official comments in print. And *Psychology Today*'s official response as well.

My letter is addressed to Patrice D. Horn, editor, *Psychology Today* magazine.

Dear Ms. Horn:

Regarding your recent article on "R-Rated Comics," I am sorry to see that your writer didn't even attempt to call us to check out his rather outrageous — and often inaccurate — assumptions.

The vast majority of publications DeMott noted in his article do not refer to themselves as "adult" comics — the very phrase carries salacious connotations that have nothing to do with most of the books he discussed. The level of sexuality in these comics is far lower than that commonly found in any other contemporary mass media, and the DeMott-praised Groo the Wanderer (a fine book, one I wish we published) is completely innocuous.

DeMott spends most of his time discussing our **American Flagg!**; it is a shame he doesn't understand that in order to follow a comic book story, one must read the words as well as look at the pictures. **Flagg** is a decidedly optimistic book — our society is faced with political and economic oblivion, and instead of accepting and succumbing to that, our heroes struggle for a better world — and they succeed in their struggle, one step at a time.

DeMott further exposes his lack of understanding with his line about deep, broad-based cynicism not being a norm in this country's working-class youth. Doesn't DeMott own a radio? Hasn't he ever listened to any rock and roll in the past thirty years? What planet does this guy come from?

Sincerely yours,
Mike Gold

Psychology Today's official response, which came more than two months after my initial letter:

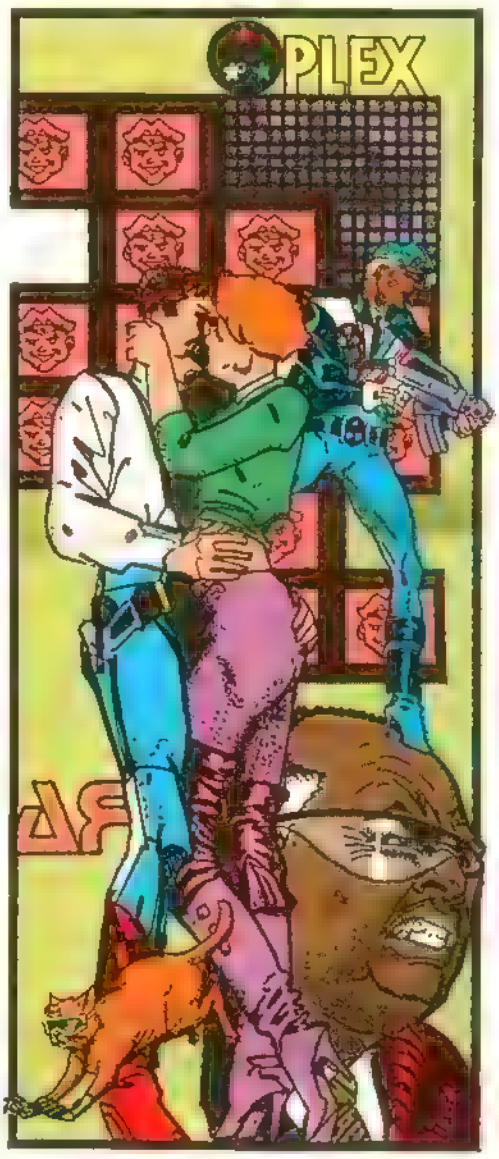
Dear Reader

Thank you for your recent letter.

We appreciate your interest in *Psychology Today* and are glad to receive thoughtful comments such as yours.

The Editors

Well, hell, guys, thanks for your appreciation, and I'm looking forward to your next pontifications on American Culture.



YOU TOO, BUDDY — part two

In a recent issue of the *Comics Journal*, Gary Groth tried to compare both the First line and the Marvel/Epic line with R. Crumb's comics: "If Robert Crumb doesn't feel censored by putting a rating on his comix, First Comics and the Epic line have nothing to worry about."

Gary, there are some differences between our stuff and Crumb's. For example, much of Crumb's work focuses on frontal nudity and/or sexual subjugation — themes we're not terribly concerned about here at First Comics (nor, I dare say, over at Marvel/Epic). The phrase "for adults only" serves to *promote* Crumb's work; in this context it would be misleading to put a similar label on ours. People might wonder where all the frontal nudity went.

I have a great deal of respect for Crumb and I do not mean to imply that our stuff is necessarily better than his, but comparing ours to his is fatuous

Perhaps we might be able to agree on a different label, Gary. How about "for somewhat mature readers?"

— Mike Gold

FIRST IN JUNE

American Flagg! #13 — **Howard Chaykin** and guest-artists **Jim Sherman** and **Rick Burchett** start Raul off on his new career as Gretchen Holstrum reveals the secrets of her past in "Mother's Day!"

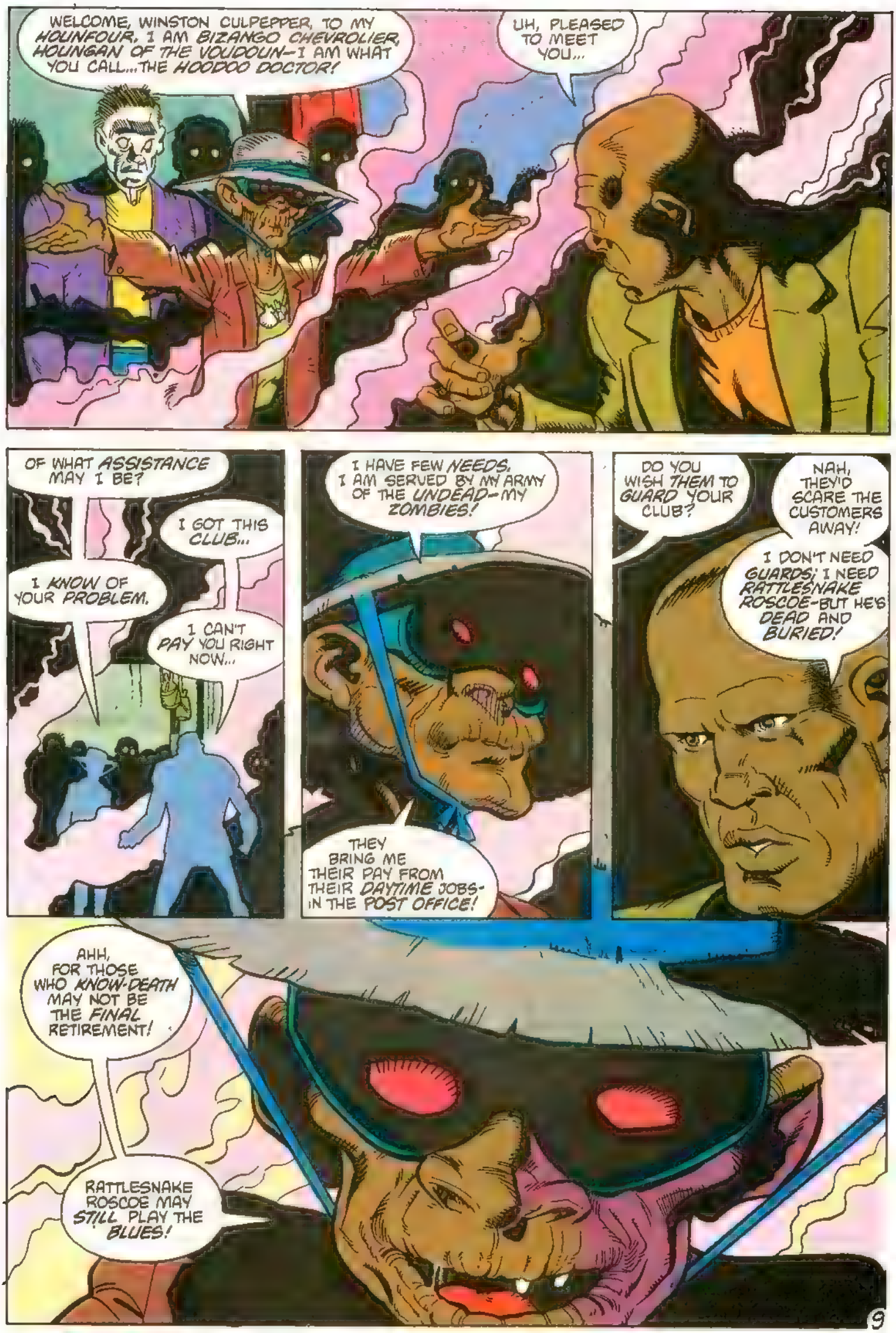
E-Man #19 — Zombies, voodoo doctors and street gangs — the perfect setting for "Hoodoo Blues," **Joe Staton's** musical **E-Man** epic, inked by **Rick Burchett!**

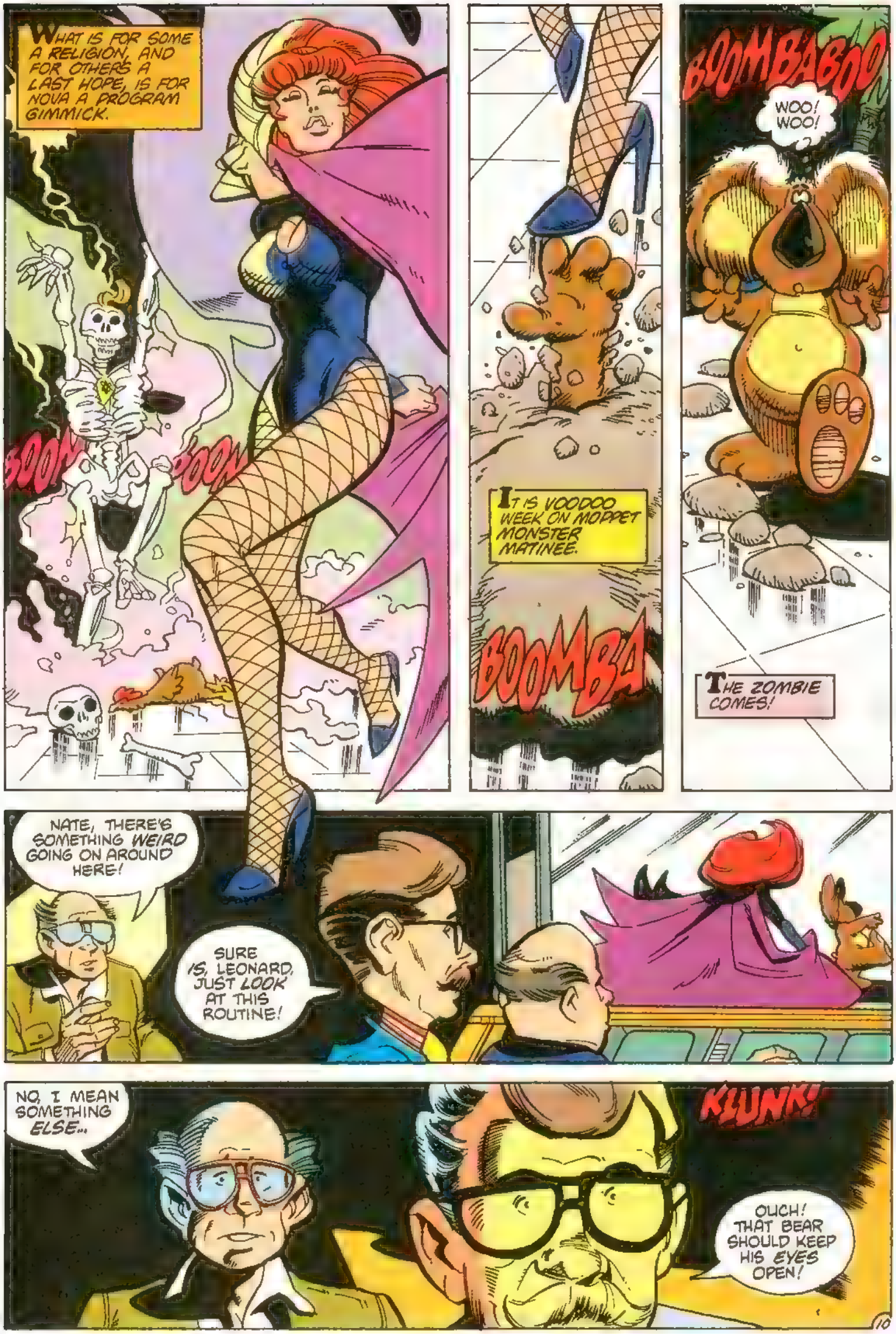
Grimjack #3 — BlackJacMac rejoins Grimmer in a deadly family reunion as **John Ostrander** and **Timothy Truman** bring us "Blood Relations!" Meanwhile, getting snockered takes on a strange new meaning in "Old Mink," the **John Ostrander/Steve Bissette** Munden's Bar story.

Jon Sable, Freelance #17 — Jon must avenge the assassination of a Russian friend — but first, he's got to survive a lethal cross-country train ride from New York to the Los Angeles Olympics! "Deadly Games, part one" by **Mike Grell!**

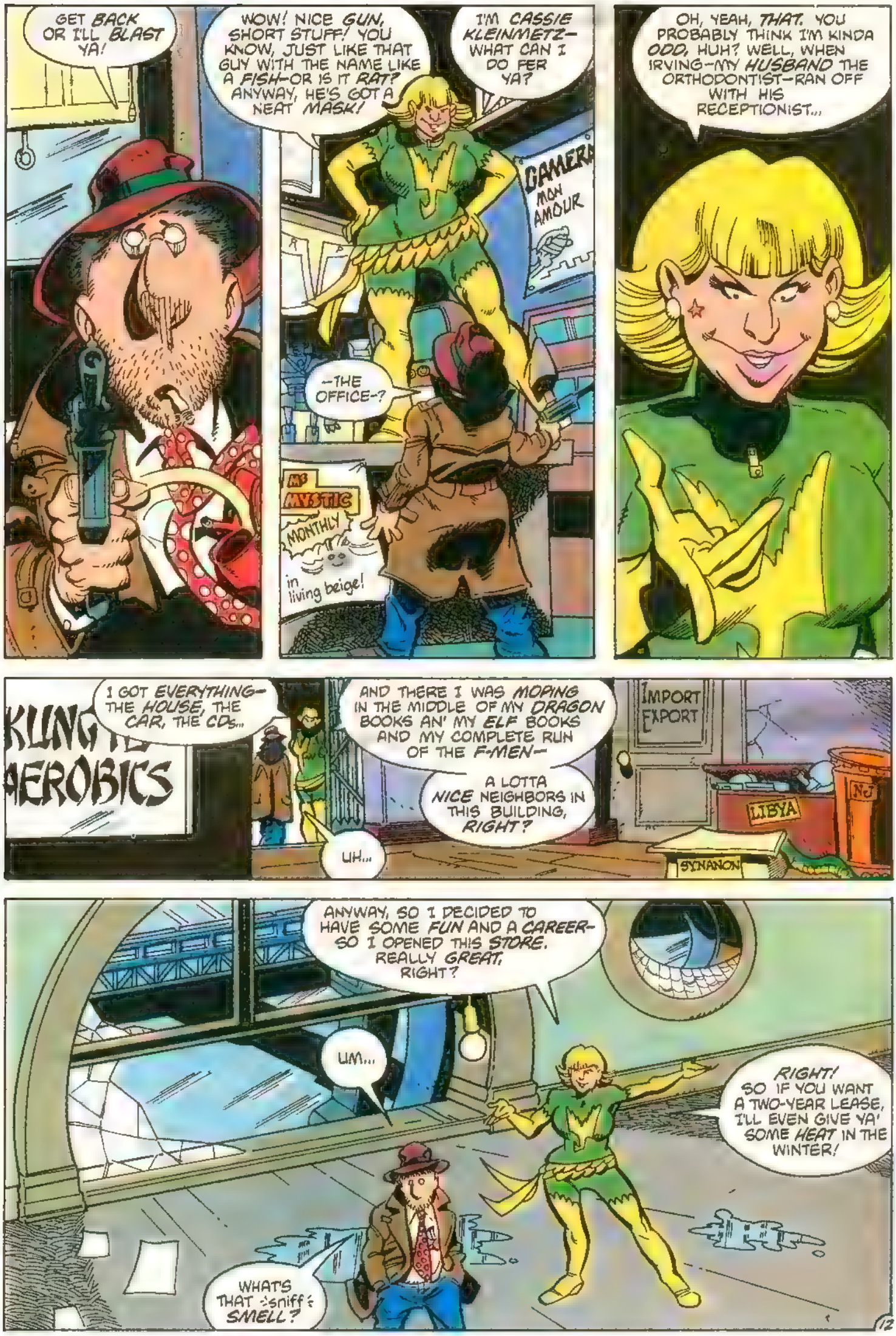
Starslayer #21 — The fate of Black Thom and the battle with death goddess Morrigan — by **John Ostrander, Timothy Truman** and **Hilary Barta!** And the origin of the Black Flame continues — by **Peter Gillis, Tom Sutton** and **Don Lomax!**

Warp #17 — Cumulus takes on Chaos in the depths of Cynosure, as The Outrider meets Sargon to confront the Masters of War! All this in two stories, both written by **Peter Gillis** and inked by **Mike Gustovich. Jerry Bingham** pencils the Cynosure lead, and **Bill Willingham** pencils the Outrider/Sargon back!

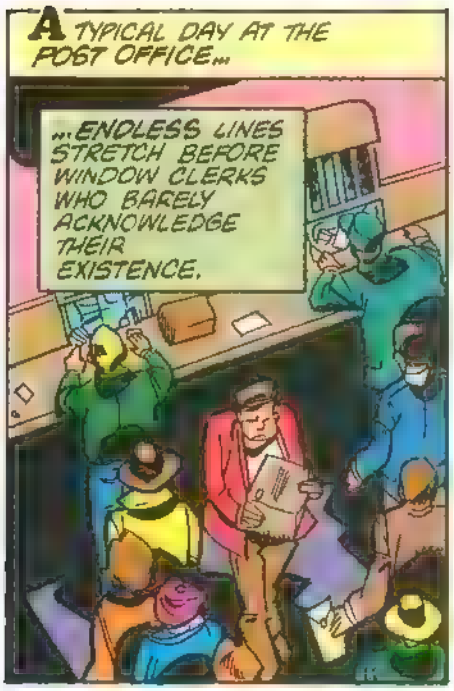

WELCOME, WINSTON CULPEPPER, TO MY HOUNFOUR. I AM BIZANGO CHEVROLIER, HOUNGAN OF THE VOUDOUN—I AM WHAT YOU CALL...THE HOODOO DOCTOR!
UH, PLEASED TO MEET YOU...
OF WHAT ASSISTANCE MAY I BE?
I GOT THIS CLUB...
I KNOW OF YOUR PROBLEM.
I CAN'T PAY YOU RIGHT NOW...
I HAVE FEW NEEDS. I AM SERVED BY MY ARMY OF THE UNDEAD—MY ZOMBIES!
THEY BRING ME THEIR PAY FROM THEIR DAYTIME JOBS- IN THE POST OFFICE!
DO YOU WISH THEM TO GUARD YOUR CLUB?
NAH, THEY'D SCARE THE CUSTOMERS AWAY!
I DON'T NEED GUARDS; I NEED RATTLESNAKE ROSCOE—BUT HE'S DEAD AND BURIED!
AHH, FOR THOSE WHO KNOW-DEATH MAY NOT BE THE FINAL RETIREMENT!
RATTLESNAKE ROSCOE MAY STILL PLAY THE BLUES!

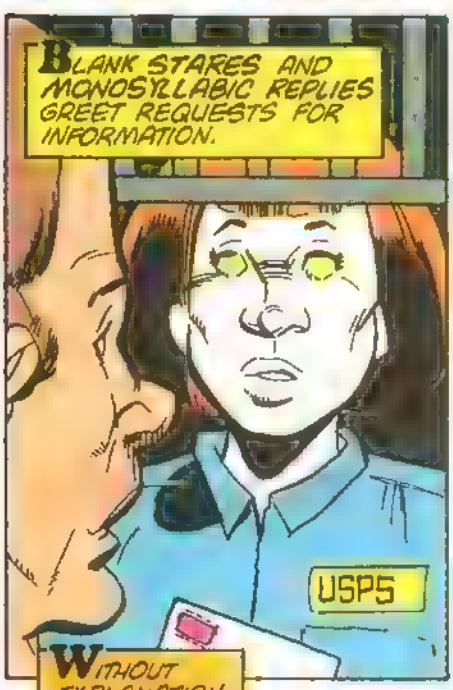

WHAT IS FOR SOME A RELIGION, AND FOR OTHERS A LAST HOPE, IS FOR NOVA A PROGRAM GIMMICK.
BOOM
BOOM
IT IS VOODOO WEEK ON MOPPET MONSTER MATINEE.
BOOMBA
BOOMBABOO
WOO! WOO!
THE ZOMBIE COMES!
NATE, THERE'S SOMETHING WEIRD GOING ON AROUND HERE!
SURE IS, LEONARD, JUST LOOK AT THIS ROUTINE!
NO, I MEAN SOMETHING ELSE...
KLUNK!
OUCH! THAT BEAR SHOULD KEEP HIS EYES OPEN!

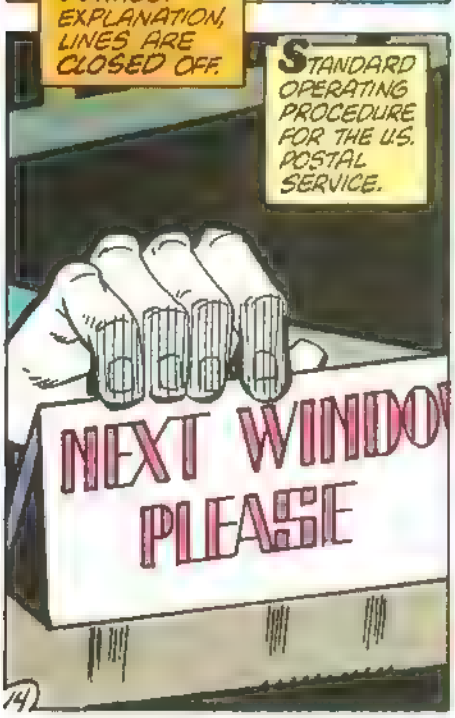
BUT WHAT OF MICHAEL MAUSER? HAS SOME IMPORTANT CASE CALLED HIM AWAY?
FOURTEEN DOWN, ONLY ONE TO GO.
WHAT'D THAT GUY MEAN— HE'D HAFTA' FUMIGATE AFTER I LEFT?
HMM... BIG GLASS BOX— JUST AIN'T GOT THE CHARM OF MY OLD PLACE OVER HOY FAT'S!
HEY, THAT'S MORE LIKE IT.
Cassandra's COMIX and STORIES
office for rent
IT AIN'T THAT I MISS TRONN OR NOTHIN'—IT'S JUST THAT IT'S REAL HANDY HAVIN' A PARTNER THAT CAN TURN INTA STUFF.
AND SINCE HE'S STILL HUNG UP ON RED, HE'S DETERMINED TO STAY IN CHICAGO.
"MAYBE THIS'LL MAKE A GOOD TEMPORARY OFFICE..."
FACE MUTANT VENGEANCE, SLIME-SLUG!
YAAHHGG!


GET BACK OR I'LL BLAST YA!
WOW! NICE GUN, SHORT STUFF! YOU KNOW, JUST LIKE THAT GUY WITH THE NAME LIKE A FISH—OR IS IT RAT? ANYWAY, HE'S GOT A NEAT MASK!
I'M CASSIE KLEINMETZ—WHAT CAN I DO FER YA?
CAMERA MON AMOUR
—THE OFFICE—?
MS MYSTIC MONTHLY
in living beige!
OH, YEAH, THAT. YOU PROBABLY THINK I'M KINDA ODD, HUH? WELL, WHEN IRVING—MY HUSBAND THE ORTHODONTIST—RAN OFF WITH HIS RECEPTIONIST...
I GOT EVERYTHING—THE HOUSE, THE CAR, THE CDs...
AEROBICS
AND THERE I WAS MOPING IN THE MIDDLE OF MY DRAGON BOOKS AN' MY ELF BOOKS AND MY COMPLETE RUN OF THE F-MEN—
A LOTTA NICE NEIGHBORS IN THIS BUILDING, RIGHT?
UH...
IMPORT EXPORT
LIBYA
NJ
SYNANON
ANYWAY, SO I DECIDED TO HAVE SOME FUN AND A CAREER—SO I OPENED THIS STORE. REALLY GREAT, RIGHT?
UM...
RIGHT! SO IF YOU WANT A TWO-YEAR LEASE, I'LL EVEN GIVE YA' SOME HEAT IN THE WINTER!
WHAT'S THAT :sniff: SMELL?
12

AND, BACK ON MAXWELL STREET...
HOODOO MAN SAYS WE STILL NEED A BLACK CAT BONE!
THAT MAY PRESENT SOME DIFFICULTY.
YOU MUST CATCH THE BLACK CAT IN A GRAVEYARD BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON,,, FOLLOWING A RAIN...
,,,BOIL HIM ALIVE UNTIL THE MEAT COMES OFF,,,
...SUCK HIS BONES ONE BY ONE... THE BONE THAT TASTES SWEET, THAT IS THE BLACK CAT BONE.
WELL, SELL ME ONE.
BUT I SOLD THE LAST ONE I POSSESSED.
SOLD IT-TO WHO?
"TO THE WHITE WOMAN WITH RED HAIR-
"-THE ONE WHO IS ON THE TELEVISION!"


A TYPICAL DAY AT THE POST OFFICE...
...ENDLESS LINES STRETCH BEFORE WINDOW CLERKS WHO BARELY ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR EXISTENCE.


BLANK STARES AND MONOSYLLABIC REPLIES GREET REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION.
USPS


WITHOUT EXPLANATION, LINES ARE CLOSED OFF.
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE.
NEXT WINDO
PLEASE
14

BUT TODAY, THIS FAMILIAR ARMY OF THE LIVING DEAD IS CALLED AWAY ON A MOST UNUSUAL MISSION.
USPS
WHAT'S KANE UP TO NOW?
SOMETIMES SHE GETS A LITTLE CARRIED AWAY WITH THESE PRODUCTIONS.
GLEEP!

A TYPICAL DAY AT THE POST OFFICE...

...ENDLESS LINES STRETCH BEFORE WINDOW CLERKS WHO BARELY ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR EXISTENCE.

BLANK STARES AND MONOSYLLABIC REPLIES GREET REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION.

USPS

WITHOUT EXPLANATION, LINES ARE CLOSED OFF.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE.

NEXT WINDOW PLEASE

BUT TODAY, THIS FAMILIAR ARMY OF THE LIVING DEAD IS CALLED AWAY ON A MOST UNUSUAL MISSION.

KRAASH!

ALEC!

WHAT'S KANE UP TO NOW?

SOMETIMES SHE GETS A LITTLE CARRIED AWAY WITH THESE PRODUCTIONS.

HEY! LET GO!

NOVA!

GLEEP!

KRAASH!
ALEC!
HEY! LET GO!
NOVA!

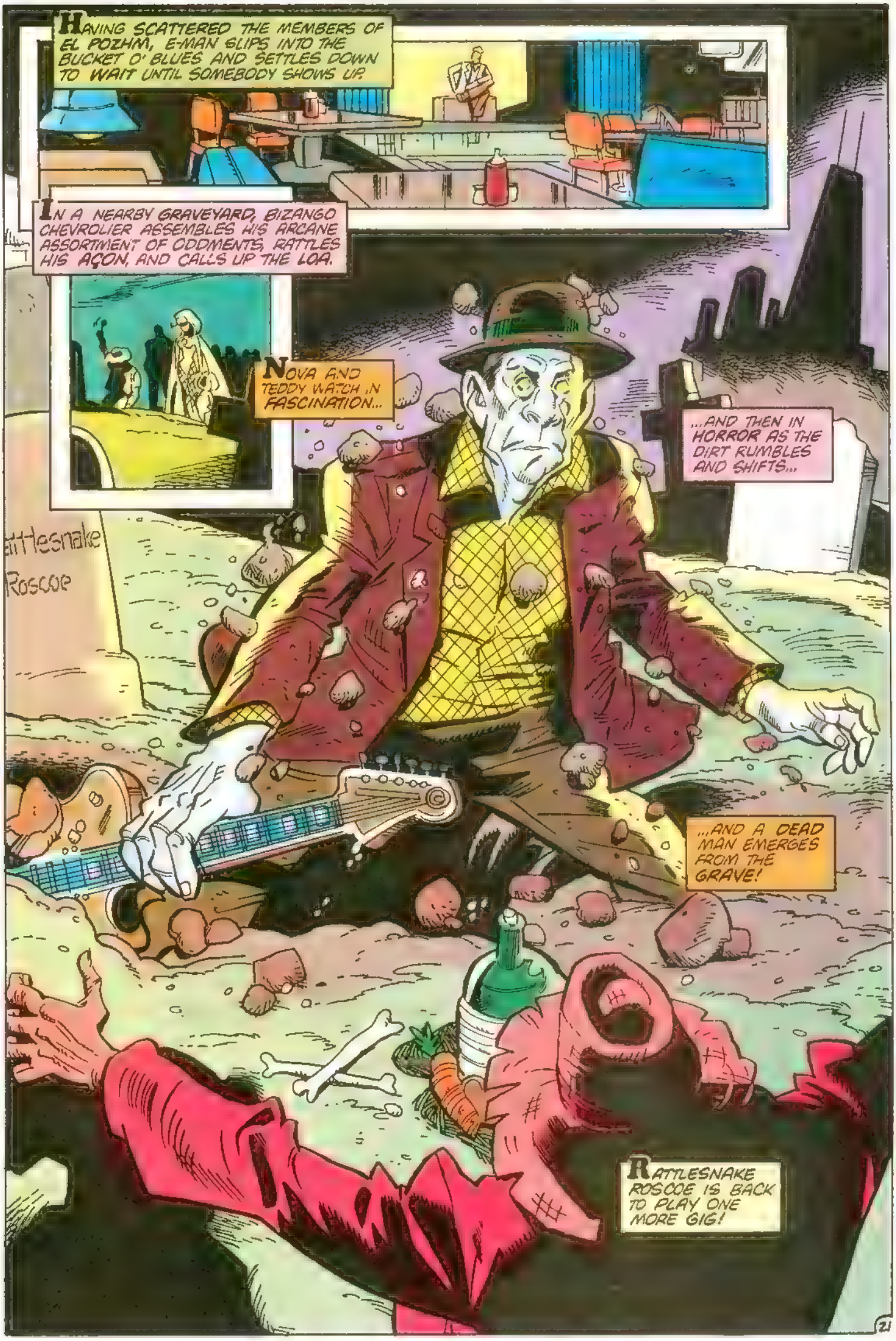
ALEC, IS THIS ANOTHER ONE OF MAUSER'S MESSES?
IT'S NOTHING TO DO WITH ME- HONEST!
NO MATTER- I'LL GET RID OF THESE BOZOS!
WHUNK!
WHA-? DIDN'T EVEN FAZE HIM!
WELL, THEY MAY BE DETERMINED-
-BUT THEY'RE NOT VERY LIGHT ON THEIR FEET!
THERE! THAT SHOULD SLOW THEM DOWN A BIT.
HEY! GET THE BEAR OFF CAMERA!
!!
HE'LL RUIN THE SHOT!

NOVA, LOOK OUT-THERE'S ANOTHER ONE!
NO SWEAT, BIG FELLA-
I'VE GOT THE HANG OF THIS NOW!
YEAH, THESE CHARACTERS JUST FALL RIGHT OVER!
SKIPPP
THEY'RE ALL RUNNING OFF-
TEDDY, ARE YOU-?
ONE OF THOSE GUYS CARRIED HIM OFF- WASN'T IT PART OF YOUR SHOW?
NOVA, I'M GOING AFTER TEDDY- YOU FINISH YOUR SHOW!
MY SHOW? MY SHOW!
NOW WE RETURN TO "BRIDE OF THE ZOMBIE," HERE IN NOVA'S CHAMBER OF HORRORS...
WOW! SHE SURE KNOWS HOW TO PUT ON A SHOW.
YEAH, NATE, THE LADY'S GOT A REAL GIFT!

NOW WHERE DID HE GO?
UH-OH, DOWN THERE ON THE EL TRACKS-
"AND THERE'S A TRAIN COMING!"
RAVEN
!
GOTCHA!
YOU STAY HERE WITH NOVA- AND KEEP OUT OF TROUBLE!
THE GUY JUST UP AND WALKED AWAY AFTER THE TRAIN RAN OVER HIM-LIKE A REAL ZOMBIE!
I BET THIS HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THAT VOODOO STORE.
AHH... EVEN IF MY ZOMBIES DID NOT RETRIEVE THE BLACK CAT BONE, THEY DID BRING ME PART OF THE WOMAN'S CAPE!

I WILL MOLD THE WAX...
"...TO DOMINATE HER WILL..."
"...BY RESONANCE WITH HER ESPRIT— HER SOUL!
"AND SHE WILL BRING THAT WHICH I NEED FOR THE SACRIFICE!"
DUVALIER CLAIMS HE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ZOMBIES..
..BUT I DON'T QUITE BELIEVE HIM
AH-HAH-IT'S SOMETHING ABOUT A PLACE CALLED THE "BUCKET O' BLUES"!
I'D BETTER GO CHECK IT OUT!
BLACK CAT BONE-MUST GO TO BIZANGO CHEVROLIER-
HEY, GUYS, DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ZOMBIES?
BUCKET
FRI. Rattlesnake
IN NEW YORK, NO ONE WOULD PAY ATTENTION TO A SCANTILY-CLAD REDHEAD CARRYING A STRUGGLING KOALA BEAR.
IN CHICAGO IT GETS A FEW MILD STARES.

ZOMBIES? HEY, YOU BEIN' FUNNY, WHITE BREAD?
THIS THE WRONG PART OF TOWN FOR WHITE BOYS!
OH, SORRY, MY MISTAKE...
HOW ABOUT NOW?
YOU TOO FUNNY FOR YOUR OWN GOOD!
WELL, I CAN BE A REAL CUT-UP TOO!
HEY!
SHPD
THAT'S NOT NICE!
WHOOSH
20


HAVING SCATTERED THE MEMBERS OF EL POZHM, E-MAN SLIPS INTO THE BUCKET O' BLUES AND SETTLES DOWN TO WAIT UNTIL SOMEBODY SHOWS UP.
IN A NEARBY GRAVEYARD, BIZANGO CHEVROLIER ASSEMBLES HIS ARCANE ASSORTMENT OF ODDMENTS, RATTLES HIS AÇON, AND CALLS UP THE LOA.
NOVA AND TEDDY WATCH IN FASCINATION...
...AND THEN IN HORROR AS THE DIRT RUMBLES AND SHIFTS...
...AND A DEAD MAN EMERGES FROM THE GRAVE!
RATTLESNAKE ROSCOE IS BACK TO PLAY ONE MORE GIG!
attlesnake
Roscoe

HEY, ALEC- IS THAT YOU?
NOVA?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
IT'S QUITE A STORY-
THIS HOODOO DOCTOR NAMED BIZANGO MADE A DOLL AND-
WE'LL EXPLAIN THINGS LATER. RIGHT NOW, WE'VE GOT TO GET READY FOR THE SHOW!
YOU ABOUT DONE WITH THAT LOCK?
LIVERIES RING BELL
YEAH, THEY GONNA LEARN NOT TO MESS WITH EL POZHM!
INSIDE, A CAPACITY CROWD GATHERS, BROUGHT BY THE CHANCE TO HEAR THE LEGENDARY RATTLESNAKE ROSCOE.
THERE'S A RUMOR THAT EL POZHM HAD KILLED ROSCOE.
BUT ROSCOE IS HERE.

THE LANKY FIGURE EMERGES FROM THE HAZE OF CIGARETTE SMOKE...
THE LIGHTS GO UP SLOWLY.
ROSCOE STARTS TO STRUM HIS GUITAR.
HE OPENS HIS MOUTH TO SING.
BLAM!
NO! IT CAN'T BE!
I BLEW HIS BRAINS CLEAN OUT!
BUT HE'S STILL STANDING THERE!
WHICH IS A LOT MORE THAN YOU'LL BE DOING WHEN I'M THROUGH!
NO! THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!
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WHAP!
SPRINGTIME FOR PUNKS!
KRAASH!
TABLE FOR ONE COMING RIGHT UP!
TIME TO BLOW SOME BLUES!
YIII!
EAT YOUR HEART OUT, GEORGE SMITH!
LET ME OUTTA HERE!
HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT? THEY LEFT WITHOUT LEAVING A TIP!
ALEC! RATTLESNAKE IS ABOUT TO SING..
WE'LL HAVE THIS SHOW YET--WE WON'T CLOSE DOWN!
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THE MUSIC STARTS...
OH, LORD...
...RATTLESNAKE SINGS...
OH, NO, NO...
...THE BLUES IS REBORN...
PLEASE, NO, STOP!
:sob:
YOU GOTTA STOP HIM-- NOBODY CAN STAND THE ZOMBIE BLUES!
CAN'T NOBODY STOP RATTLESNAKE NOW--THE BLUES HAS GOT HIM-- HE'LL KEEP SINGING 'TIL HE DROPS!
ONE OF THE BASIC RULES OF MAGIC IS: NEVER CALL UP THAT WHICH YOU CANNOT PUT DOWN.
BUCKET o' BLUES
FRI. Rattlesnake Roscoe LIVE!
EVERYONE LEAVING THE BUCKET O' BLUES HAS LEARNED THAT LESSON THE HARD WAY.
THE LIVING JUST CAN'T BEAR A DEAD MAN'S BLUES, THEY FLEE INTO THE NIGHT TO ESCAPE IT.
ALL BUT ONE: ROSCOE'S "MURDERER" IS PINNED BY OVERTURNED TABLES.
NO, PLEASE... STOP... PLEASE...

IN THE DAYS TO COME, THE BUCKET O' BLUES WILL BE BOARDED UP. IT WILL BE ABANDONED.

BUT INSIDE, RATTLESNAKE ROSCOE WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY HIS GIG-- FOREVER.

I used to love pretty women
Had my joy and felt so bright
Now those days are over
My whole world is night

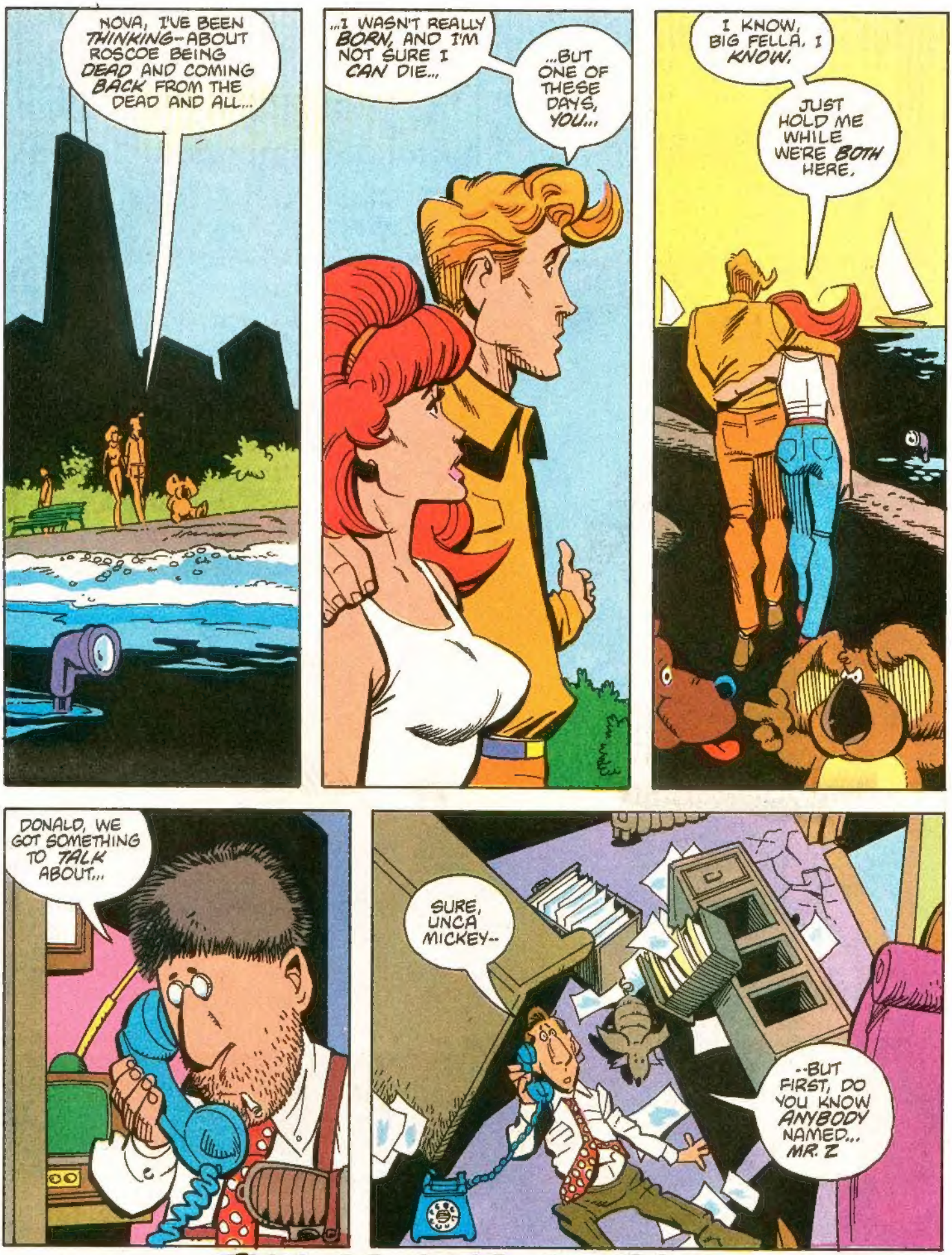
I used to be a playboy
Act so tough and brave
Now I feel so lonesome
Crawling from my grave

It's sad to be a zombie
That ain't no shame to hide
You can't feel your troubles
After you have died

The murderers done and killed me
They can't do that again
The murderers they all fear me
I'm not like other men

The Hoodoo Doctor needs me
There's zombie work to do
My evil never grieves me
When a dead man's blue*

* ZOMBIE BLUES © 1984 ALEX WALD


NOVA, I'VE BEEN THINKING--ABOUT ROSCOE BEING DEAD AND COMING BACK FROM THE DEAD AND ALL...
...I WASN'T REALLY BORN, AND I'M NOT SURE I CAN DIE...
...BUT ONE OF THESE DAYS, YOU...
I KNOW, BIG FELLA, I KNOW.
JUST HOLD ME WHILE WE'RE BOTH HERE.
DONALD, WE GOT SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT...
SURE, UNCA MICKEY--
--BUT FIRST, DO YOU KNOW ANYBODY NAMED... MR. Z

NEXT ISSUE: THE COMING OF THE GOLDEN GOPHER!